

New Life in Christ

Overview

We are united with Christ by faith. His death is our death to self and his life is our new life in him. We are tethered to him by faith and raised to new life in him. This new life leads to a new identity in Christ and a new life pursuit of daily worship to him.

Introduction

See Luke 7.11-17 and John 11.34-44 – Jesus is the giver of life. He is the resurrection and the life.

Jesus' own victory over death is seen in Matthew 28.

God loves life and he loves to give life. Death is a reality, no doubt. We hate it and so does God. But God looks at death and breathes life, he speaks life.

- we too might walk in newness of life (vs 4)
- united with him in a resurrection like his (vs 5)
- we believe that we will also live with him (vs 8)
- alive to God in Christ Jesus (vs 11)
- as those who have been brought back from death to life (vs 13)

Today we celebrate the supernatural and miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ. This event changed everything. Today we also celebrate the fact that in Jesus' resurrection life we also receive resurrection life. His life is our life by faith in him. I want to ask and answer three questions related to new life in Christ. It is God's will to give new resurrection life to those who put their faith and trust in him

- Q1: How do I access this new life?
 Q2: How will I change as a result of receiving this new life?
 Q3: How will this new life impact day-to-day living?

Q1: How do I access this new life?

A1: We access this new life by our union (or connection) with Christ.

It's not about life primarily. If Jesus is the resurrection and the life, then in him, and only with him, do we experience life. Life is the sub-gift, the secondary matter. Give me Christ whether that means life or not (Mark 8.35).

Paul illustrates this truth of our union with Christ with the practice of baptism. Paul takes the practice of baptism, which generations of the church have observed for centuries, and uses it as the picture it is meant to be. We are so united with Christ that his death is our death and his life is our life. We are raised to new life in him by our union with him.

- We were buried therefore *with him* by baptism into death...(vs 4)
- For if we have been united *with him* in a death like his, we shall certainly be united *with him* in a resurrection like his (vs 5).
- We know that our old self was crucified *with him*...(vs 6)
- Now if we have died *with Christ*, we believe that we will also live *with him* (vs 8)

Q2: How will I change as a result of receiving this new life?

A2: You will be given a new identity.

Verse 11 says “consider yourselves...” What are we to consider ourselves: dead to sin and alive to God. That’s identity.

You are dead to sin; you are tethered to Christ; you are a new creation; you are free; you are alive in Christ; you are God’s friend; you are redeemed; you are right with God; you are loved; you are his; you are his child. Don’t expend yourself in an effort to earn that. You cannot! God alone gives you identity. God alone tells you who you are. God alone defines you.

Q3: How will this new life impact day-to-day living?

A3: You will be empowered to do life God’s way, in joyful service to him.

Having access to new life in Christ; having a new identity; being changed on the interior; we now have the ability to do differently than before -- to reform our ways, to change our lifestyle, to live in worship of him.

A parallel is Romans 12.1 – we are a living sacrifice.

Reflection Questions

1. Read John 15.1-11. How does it reinforce or add to the idea of access to life by our union with Christ?
2. Of the three questions and answers, which one grabbed your attention the most and why?
3. There is a bit of a tension in the idea of being dead to sin. How am I dead to sin if I still sin so much? Spend some time talking through that tension.
4. While our identity has been changed in Christ, our understanding of that identity is a life-long pursuit. What are some practical ways God has helped you better understand your identity in him? Share a story when you grasped your identity in Christ on a deeper level.
5. In what area of your life do you struggle to present yourself to God and your whole self as an instrument of righteousness/living sacrifice? Where are you encouraged in this?
6. The book of Romans was written to the church. These words are intended for a Christian community. How can others (your Care Group, friends, family, etc.) help you understand your true identity in Christ and encourage you toward daily worship (i.e., how can you team up)?